

critical digest

505 FIFTH AVENUE, N. Y. 17, N. Y.
MU 2-0328 T. M. KRAUS



March 23, 1955 Vol. VII No. 26 The Weekly New York City Theatre Newsletter \$25 Year

This Week

Sky High-Open Door
55 W 3. Lance Barklie
and Robert Melancon pre-
sent revue with Kenny
Adams, Barbara Bailey.
Mon-Thur 8 30, Fri &
Sat at 7 PM. 3/23

Cat On a Hot Tin Roof-
Morosco. Playwrights Com-
pany presents Tennessee
Williams new play with
Barbara Bel Geddes, Burl
Ives, Ben Gazzara. Directed
by Elia Kazan. 3/24.

Future Dates

Teach Me How to Cry-
De Lys 4/6...Triple Bill-
Bijou 4/6...Three for To-
night 4/6...Champagne Com-
plex-Cort 4/12...The Ho-
neys-Longacre 4/14...Ank-
les Aweigh-Hellinger 4/18
...GUYS & DOLLS-City Cen-
ter 4/20...Phoenix '55-
Phoenix 4/22...Inherit the
Wind-National 4/24...South
Pacific-City Center 5/4...
Damn Yankee 5/5...Finian's
Rainbow-City Center 5/18...
Seventh Heaven 5/22...Ple-
asure Dome-5/27.

Tryout Dates

The Honeys-Philadelphia
3/28...Inherit the Wind-
Phil 3/31...Damn Yankee-
Phil 4/2...Seventh Heaven
Phil 4/16

Digests of Current Week Theatre Reviews

Once Over Lightly-Barbizon Plaza 3/15. Post and Jour-
nal American aisle sitters filed mild pro notices on new
revue presented by Cuadro Productions and starring Zero
Mostel, Jack Gilford and Somo Osato. Former liked disarming
amiability of it, but noted that it lacked the impish humor
and fresh comic imagination of Shoestring Revue. Latter not-
ed that stars give sense of assurance that spreads through
rest of cast. Con side also enjoyed headliners, but didn't
think they provided enough entertainment for a full evening.
Atkinson, Times, feared revue looks and sounds like the show
put on by the graduating class of a medical academy. Kerr,
Herald Tribune, puts the blame on moth-eaten material. While
Coleman, Mirror, is convinced the only way to enjoy show is
to have a friend in cast to root for.

The Miser- Downtown National 3/17. Maurice Schwartz
own version of the Moliere play presented by the Yiddish
star in English as his second bill of the NY season was not
enjoyed by the NY daily critics. Moliere, they agreed, ran a
poor second to Schwartz. Times aisle-sitter, complained that
latter's efforts reduced classic to level of Second Avenue
stock company improvisation. Besides fact that laughter is
dropped out of script, Kerr, Herald Tribune, also blamed lack
of experience of cast in lace-collar farce work. Improperly
adapted and interpreted, emerging as an embarrassing bore,
summed up McClain, Journal American. There is little left
of the work that seems theatrically stimulating, concluded
Watts, Post.

Hits Revisited- Tea Dept.

Eli Wallach in Teahouse of the August Moon provides
a captivating performance, applauds Chapman, News. Wallach is
not a carbon copy of David Wayne, but unforgettable in his own
right. Rest of cast remains superb...Kary Fickett in Tea and
Sympathy is warm, gentle and attractive, News aisle man re-
ports.

Summer Issues C.D.

Summer issues of C.D. will cover tryouts of new plays
in E astern summer theatres as reported in trade journals,
daily papers and personal inspection. Plus other features.



ROOM

DEPARTMENT

LEGIT JOBS & DUES...Before an actor can take a job in an Off Broadway theatre and earn the below subsistence \$30 per week Equity salary, he must join Equity, pay an initiation fee of \$100, plus six months dues (\$12), points out NBC Critic at Large Leon Pearson. Even tougher, he adds, is the initiation requirement of the stage designers union. Here the entrance fee is \$500.

COLUMN TIPS...George Brandt will produce an Off Broadway version of "The Investigator", the record lampooning the Army-McCarthy hearings, reports Walker...Can-Can hunting in England for a replacement for Lilo, hears Farrell...Barr & Bowden will present a short Kurt Weill opera in the fall, hints Kilgallen.

ELITE RELAXATION...British publication Who's Who lists the recreations of those included, Watson, Journal American, discovered. Christopher Fry lists "planning holidays which he does not take." Laurence Olivier names tennis, swimming, flying, golf, etc. Alec Guinness names model-making. Edith Sitwell says her recreation is silence.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...Off Broadway theatre has hit the doldrums this season and needs some O'Neills, Jones, etc., complains Coleman, Mirror...Chief lesson of Three by Thurber, notes Watts, Post, is that Thurber should write his own plays...Central City, Colo., hunting for a top summer production that can be brought to NY after an august run, reports Chapman, News.

BUS STOP BITS...Although more fully written than Come Back, Little Sheba, Bus Stop lacks the brooding tragic sense of the oncoming dramatist's first work, sums up Watts, Post. While it is perhaps less diffuse and more controlled than Pioneers, it doesn't try to look as deeply into the human heart as did the second. But Chapman, News, still does not think current work is as profound as the other two.

DRAMA MAIL BOX...Recent audience at The Master Builder failed the actors by not giving more than the minimum curtain calls, points out a Times reader...Why the coffee in some of the Off Broadway lobbies tastes like uptown orange juice puzzles a C.D. reader.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES...Kim Stanley, Bus Stop, holds a degree in psychology, has two children, arrived in NY with \$21 and not knowing a soul, Fields, Mirror, discovered. Her real name is Patricia Kimberly Reid. One of her part time jobs was selling lemonade at the Provincetown Theatre.



"Pros & Cons by T.M.K."

Once Over Lightly presents a group of pleasant people, but lacks an overall drive in both the material and the direction. Any revue with Zero Mostel and Jack Gilford has to have some funny moments. "Melvin-a nine minute Menotti" is the best and cleverest number of the show. "Benedictine" is a mad Gilford ditty that is always funny.

Off Broadway can be good and bad, and like the other elements of the theatre there is no way of predicting beforehand. But an evil which must be killed in the Off Broadway movement is the crutch of the prompter. Too many Off Broadway actors rely on the off-stage voice to throw them the line they forgot. Teleprompters may work in TV, but they should be banned in theatre.

The U.S. Post Office ban on an 1926 edition of Aristophanes' Lysistrata was lifted this week, but the owner of the book will demand a test case be made on the 75 year old Censetock Law which gave the federal postmaster arbitrary powers in banning publications. Edition published by British company has illustrations by Norman Lindsay.

Plays

Tonight in Samarkand closed...Inherit the Wind will give Sun. matinee performance instead of Mon. evening...The Hot Rock will start rehearsals Aug 1 with Margaret Whiting, Allan Jones, Maxie Rosenbloom, Joey Faye and Horace MacMahon...The Wooden Dish will star and will be directed by Louis Calhern...The First Nighter, a British play, will be presented in NY by Sander Ince and Joel Schenker...The Righteous Are Bold will be produced by Basil Langton.

Players

Chita Rivera, The Shoestring Revue, will join Seventh Heaven cast...Kim Stanley and Albert Salmi, both of Bus Stop, won NY Newspaper Guild Page One Awards...Lillian Roth will star in Pleasure Dome revue...Paul Newman won star billing in The Desperate Hours...David Brooks will turn producer next season to present a revue Tonight at Noel Coward's...Reginald Denham has resigned as director of The Honeyeats...Helen Gallagher stars in City Center's Guys and Dolls...Nancy Walker stars in Phoenix '55...Gary Wright moved into role of Cesarie in Fanny...Crandell Diehl subbed for Daniel Nagrin, Plain & Fancy.

Summer Playhouses

Bucks County, PA, Playhouse, opens May 15 with King of Hearts...Cape Theatre, NJ, opens 31st season June 20...St. John Terrell will tour Three by Thurber as summer package...Downington, PA, to erect summer musical tent, Bernard Sackett producer.

Theatre Ad Notes

Chandler Cowles thanked all concerned for allowing Saint of Bleecker Street to continue on its unique 4 performance week. He noted an avalanche of orders.

Other Broadways

"Salute to France" dates for Paris set as follows--June 20-July 3 Oklahoma...Six American plays are being presented this week in Bochum, West Germany at the Municipal Theatre...The Tender Trap will be presented in London in April.

Theatre Film Notes

Judith Anderson has a featured role in The Ten Commandments...Shirley Booth will appear in "Route 66"...Helen Hayes has withdrawn from "All Our Tomorrows"..."Oklahoma" film to debut in NY in May at Rivoli.

Theatre Vaudeville Notes

New Palace show headlines Estrellita and Baul, Frank Marlowe, Marvellos, Ben Beri, and June Mann.

Theatre Book Notes

"Laurette" by Marguerite Courtney, daughter of Laurette Taylor, will be published in April by Rinehart..."Spiritual Value in Shakespeare" by Dr Ernest House will be published in April by Abington Press..."The ABC's of Play Production" by Howard Bailey published by McKay.

Theatre TV-Radio Notes

Exclusive NY showing of the closed circuit ANTA Album Mar 28 will be at EKO Fordham at 9 PM. Tickets \$10, 5, 3, 2 should be made payable to Care, Care-ANTA Benefit, 660 Fifth Ave...Reunion in Vienna to be presented on NBC TV Producers Showcase April 4...No Time for Sergeants presented on ABC-TV will be done on Broadway Oct 20 by Maurice Evans.

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OFF

BROADWAY

THEATRE

RECORD

COMMENTS

Three Sisters will continue thru May at 4th St. Theatre. Producer David Ross has asked for play suggestions... The White Devil was repeated for a second Mon. "Sideshow" at Phoenix... Deidre Owens will portray lead in Teach Me How to Cry at De Lys April 5... Grand Guignol Theatre presented week-ends at Van Bunselaer Hotel, Greenwich Village... Macdohen in Uniform to be presented by Equity Library Theatre April 20-24... The Trial was presented by Theatre 12 at WMA... Cornelia Otis Skinner will present her mona-drama The Wives of Henry VIII as benefit for Equity Library Theatre May 1 at Plymouth. Tickets \$4.60... Othello will be presented at 6th Annual Shakespeare Festival of Hofstra, LI, College May 2-8.

Digests of Reviews-Off Broadway

In April Once, presented Sun. only thru May 8 at Broadway C ongregational Church by Broadway Chapel Players won two kind notices and one con notice. Gelb, Times, billed it as a moving story of man's search for faith in the Middle Ages. Herridge, Post, found it less absorbing than Noah, the group's last show, but wished that sermons in general were as vivid and tolerant as William Alexander Percy's dramatic poem. Variety mugg had several complaints, the first being that the words tumble forth in such profusion that the ideas are sometimes hard to follow. Critic did admit message was timely.

The White Devil, presented at Phoenix on Mon 3/14 as "Sideshow" program, was cheered by Times, Mirror and Post critics as one of finest Off Broadway efforts of season, and panned by McClain, Journal American as confusing 16th century mish-mash. John Webster's thriller is given a capital performance sums up Atkinson, Times. Elizabethan melodrama is so full of blood and evil that our gang thrillers are pale in comparison, adds Herridge, Post.

Plain and Fancy original cast album (Capitol) was okayed by Zinsser, Herald Tribune, and Variety mugg. Score is orchestrated in a rich and cheerful way, and the album, noted Herald Tribune editor, though not memorable, is nice to have around the house. Trade paper reviewer enjoyed it more. He tabbed it a standout, done with care and taste.



THEATRE

TV

COMMENTS

NBC TV Connecticut Yankee with Eddie Albert and Janet Blair wasn't up to par, vetoed Crosby, Herald Tribune, and Rose, Variety, mostly because script itself is dated. But Gross, News, enjoyed the 90 minute presentation of the 1927 musical.

THEATRE

OUT OF

TOWN



Chicago current shows include Dear Charles, Oh Men-Oh Women, South Pacific, Tea and Sympathy and The King and I... Pittsburgh is playing host to The Rainmaker with Geraldine Page... St. Louis is viewing The Tender Trap... San Francisco fans are seeing The Tea-house of the August Moon... Columbus folk are enjoying The Solid Gold Cadillac... Toronto is stop for road company of The Pajama Game... Cleveland playgoers learning about The Fifth Season.

